



Without Warning by UrsaMajorStories

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Summary: {Two-Shot} When Nancy has a night terror that brings back her inescapable memories, there are so many people that come to her mind. People she cares about. People she lost. But only one could understand.

1. Chapter 1

She could feel her vocal cords constrict as she tried to scream. They grated together painfully, the muscles aggressively tearing into each other. Her breath left her lungs as she gasped for air. Droplets of cold sweat slithered from the nape of her neck, seeping into her plush, velvety pillow. The cotton sheets coiled around her figure like a hostile predator. Her room was unrecognizable, completely submerged in the dark of the night. Shadows taunted her as they glided across the walls. Her heart began to thump against her breast bone, threatening to break it.

Nancy thrashed around on the bed, sobbing as she remembered the menacing façade of that *thing*. Salty tears lined her bottom lashes. Her arms frantically pulled at the blankets that confined her to the mattress. Finally, she freed herself from their grasp, tumbling spastically to the floor. Shockwaves of pain jolted through her body as she felt her back connect with the floor. She knew that her muscles would ache in the morning, but the only thing that mattered now was reaching the light switch.

In the back of her mind, she could hear the inhuman howling of the creature that terrorized her nightmares. Nancy's feet nearly slipped out from under her as she scrambled to the wall. If she could get there, to something solid and real, she'd be safe. As soon as her finger touched the switch, uplifting light swamped the room. Her eyelids squeezed shut as the brightness assaulted her pupils. Big mistake.

The demogorgon outspread the folds of its face. Rows upon rows of teeth were imbedded in the flesh of its flower-like maw. They glinted inches from her face, ready to sink into her body.

She shrieked, forcing her eyes open. Her jaw clamped down as she berated herself for being so fragile. This was the first time she had the nightmare in months. Then again, it was also the first time in months she decided to sleep with the lights off. The monster was consuming her thoughts again, which was irrational to say the least. The thing was dead, according to Mike and his friends. It wasn't coming back. There was absolutely no reason to be afraid anymore. So, why was she?

Nancy sighed in frustration. Sleep wasn't an option anymore. The digital clock on her bedside table projected the time with an angry, red hue. 2:30am. Dread rapidly made her blood congeal as the heat left her body. Tonight, the air bit into her skin, causing goosebumps to rise in a feeble attempt to warm her. But, she was sure that no amount of warmth would lull her back into her terror riddled slumber.

Her pulse quickened with new anxiety. If she was unable to sleep, she'd be left alone with her thoughts. Nothing would be able to save her from the vivid memories of her time in the upside down.

Clutching her head, she focused on slowing down her breathing. One thought had wormed its way into her feverish mind, and reassured her enough to regain some sense of stability. Maybe she wasn't the only one still having nightmares.

There was a whole team of people who had witnessed the powerful beast and the things it was capable of. Although, Mike was the only one in her family who got as close as she did to that monster. And, Mike was one of the only ones still alive. She thought about the group of brave boys who stood by each other through thick and thin. She thought about Steve and Jonathan, facing the Demogorgon by her side. She thought about Hopper and Joyce, trudging through the Upside Down to find a lost angel. She thought about her friend Barbara and nearly collapsed to her knees, trembling in the agony of losing one of her only true friends. If she hadn't abandoned her, left her to fend for herself...

Her breath caught in her throat as she shook her head. Dwelling on this wouldn't help anything. Dwelling on *all* of this wouldn't help her sleep. Her thoughts became toxic once the Demogorgon weaved its way into her dreams. The silence in the room was blaring in her ears, encouraging her anxiety.

Out of all these people, she couldn't help but think of one who could save her from this never-ending night.

Nancy suddenly felt herself walking down the stairs to her dad's office. She didn't know why her legs decided to take her on a journey, but she didn't fight them. Her shadow outlined the doorway as she

peered into the shadowy room. Her eyes adjusted slowly after she blinked a few times. A pad of neon yellow sticky notes seemed to glow on the top of her father's prized mahogany working desk. Beside them lay a sleek fountain pen. She darted into the room, snatching up the notes and pen, and quickly darted out again. She felt like screaming. Before the Demogorgon, she had no problem with dimly lit hallways and rooms. Now, darkness felt like it followed her, stalked her. It terrified her.

She rushed into the kitchen and slapped the light switch on in a panicked frenzy. The countertop uttered sharp, clanging noises as she slammed the stolen utensils onto it. Silently, she rolled her eyes at herself. She knew this was rash, stupid, impulsive—and just about any synonym for the word crazy. But if she lost her nerve, then she'd be forced back into her own personal hell, staring at her bedroom ceiling with bloodshot eyes until dawn. She cursed at herself as she shook the pen. Nancy scribbled whatever came to her, hopping that Mike would understand.

Mike,

I'm taking your bike. Had a nightmare. I'm not going far. Please cover for me. I'll owe you big time.

~Nancy

She leaned against the counter for strength as she looked at her trembling hand. The letters on the small paper looked as if they were shivering, like they were quivering at the sight of the monster as well. She huffed as she ran to his bedroom door and slipped the note underneath. He would probably know where she was going.

Nancy bolted back to her room and found a little, pink duffle bag she used in elementary school for sleepovers. She threw a set of clean clothes into it haphazardly. Looking back at the clock she gasped.
2:50am.

Her eyes widened in shock. Only twenty minutes had passed? She thought it had taken her at least an hour to come to a decision about what she was going to do. The pulse in her veins quickened as she realized she didn't really think any of this through. Why was this the

first solution to pop into her mind? Why did she go along with it? Why did she think this would help?

Gripping her duffle bag, she pushed those questions out of her mind. Answering them didn't matter. She concluded that she needed this, needed *him*. That was enough to convince herself that everything would be ok. Her mind would get her in trouble. Her heart was almost never wrong.

She descended the stairs like a shadow, silent and fleeting. Her hands fumbled with the door to the garage, her duffle bag clanging against the wood a few times before it finally opened.

The nocturnal wind electrified Nancy's nerves back to life. Gusts whipped at her cheeks and blew hair into a disarray of tangles. She laughed. It was like being able to taste the outside world after being locked inside an air-tight, windowless cage for too long. Yet, at the same time, she could feel ominous eyes watching her from every shaded tree, every crevasse hidden by pitch. The bike that was carrying her towards her destination was somewhat small, but she could manage. She was just grateful for the guiding light hooked to the front of it, and the way the wheels never squeaked as she trudged it through the darkness of the night. This was Mike's most prized possession. He took such good care of it. Nancy was determined to get it back to him as soon as possible, and in one piece.

In the distance, she could see the all too familiar house. The Byer's house.

Her heart jumped as she understood the reality of her situation. She was here, in her pajamas, in the middle of the night. The only excuse she had to be there was a measly nightmare. That didn't seem like enough now. She stood and remembered the horrors that filled that house. Broken ceilings and walls, talking lights, monsters and fire, a torn family...

Another gale of wind blew past her, whispering taunts, *"Imagine living in that house. A house where all the nightmares were real. Where everything happened. Where it will continue to happen."* It hissed its intimidating monologue in her ear as she shivered with the words'

chill. She braced herself as she held the bike's handles; they bit her fingers with a piercing cold. This was her last chance to turn back.

If the wind spoke true, maybe he needed her too.

She gritted her teeth and said under her breath, "It'll be fine."

Nancy guided the bike gently to the backyard, leaning it against the wooded panels of the house. It had been so long since the night they had decided to kill that *thing*, but she remembered where his window was placed. She shouldn't have, but she did.

The temperature was quickly falling, and her thin, cotton sleepwear wasn't storing heat for her. She rolled her eyes at herself, feeling her cheeks burn with her idiotic choices. It may have been summer, but the nights still become bitter. Did she have enough sense when planning the murder of a monster? Yes. Did she have enough sense to change into warmer clothes? No. Of course not.

The little, pink duffle bag was hanging on the handle of the bike, waiting for her. She snatched it from its perch and made her way to the glass pane she believed was his. Her feet stopped short. The light was on.

Suddenly, she plopped down onto her hands and knees, crawling instead so she wouldn't be seen. At least, not right away. When she was comfortably crouched under the window, she allowed her head to raise ever-so-slightly, just enough to peak in. She was hoping he was awake, but what she saw through the window made it hard to tell.

Jonathan lay in a bundled heap of blankets. His eyes were squeezed tight, which made him look like he was forcing sleep, or wishing for it to come. Although, Nancy could see his shallow breath through the cocoon of sheets. It was slow enough. He was asleep, but certainly not peacefully. She glanced around and saw that there was another window full of light. Will.

She had forgotten that their rooms were next to each other. But, why the light? Then, it clicked in her head. They both slept with the light on. Nancy wondered if Joyce did too.

Her eyes flicked back to Jonathan. He looked just about as frustrated as Nancy felt. She let herself fully stand and gathered her courage. It took her this far. One more leap was all she needed.

As she tapped her knuckles on the heavy glass, she prayed she wouldn't startle him. Her prayers weren't answered. Jonathan sprang up with an alarmed yelp and tumbled over the bed in mess of blankets that kept him hostage. He landed rather close to the window, and Nancy couldn't stop her small giggle. It had reminded her of her own struggle with the blankets as she woke from her night terror.

He wrestled with the cotton bindings as he scrambled to stand. Then he gave up, tossing himself onto the blankets while rubbing the sleep from his vision. When Jonathan finally lifted his hands, he was left staring up at Nancy with frightened doe-eyes.

Nancy was sure she mimicked his surprise. She placed her hand on the window softly, as if to try and say she was sorry. A shaking hand reached up to unlock the inside of the window, and swiftly went back to its place at Jonathan's side. Nancy pushed on the window slightly and swung her legs over the ledge and into the warmth of the room. The little, pink duffle bag followed her, smacking the floor with an unintentional *bang*. She sighed while she sat on the sill, looking at her feet with sudden humiliation. She must have looked stupid to him, maybe even crazy, to come to his house in the middle of the night without warning.

"H-Hi..." A small voice whispered.

Nancy looked up a little to see that Jonathan's face had softened from fright for himself to concern for her. A meek smile appeared on his lips. She found herself returning his smile and whispering the same awkward, "Hi."

"Um..." He scratched his head, quickly avoiding her eyes as a blush dusted his cheekbones.

"I'm sorry...I had a...um...nightmare..." Nancy tried to explain without sounding like a lost child. She failed.

Jonathan's eyes grew as he looked back at her with understanding, "Oh."

He quickly unraveled himself from the blankets and threw them onto the bed. Then he stood and looked at her helplessly, like he wasn't quite sure about what he should do, "Wh-Why-"

"Because...I...Can I come in?" Nancy stumbled over her words. Why didn't she think about what to say beforehand?

"Oh! Yeah! Um...I'm sorry..." He gently grabbed her by the hands and led her to the bed. The window was shut and latched as she sat down next to the mound of disheveled covers. Jonathan looked beside the window at the duffle bag before he turned back to Nancy, "Did you plan this?"

"No."

"Oh," Jonathan gazed at her with bewildered eyes, "Um...Aren't you still going with-"

"We broke up. A week ago. I haven't told anyone," Nancy spit out those words with ease, and it stunned her. Why was it so easy to say that...

"Oh..." Jonathan began mess with the bedsheets, "I'm sorry the bed isn't made. I...uh...move a lot in my sleep."

"It's okay," She watched him try to straighten the multitude of blankets out. He was in a black and white baseball tee and some black sweatpants. A smile crept back onto her face when she saw his blush return.

"Did you want to sleep in here tonight? If you do I can go out to the couch..."

"I was...hoping that you'd stay with me," It was Nancy's turn to blush as she spoke those words.

He nodded his head minutely in disbelief.

She spoke again, "I'm...I'm sorry...I really didn't think this through."

"Hey..." He came around to the other side of the bed and sat next to her, "You're ok."

That was what she needed. That was why she needed *him*. He said so little, but he knew what to say. Nancy could feel herself tremble as hot tears tossed themselves down her ruddy cheeks. That was everything she needed and more. She was sure Jonathan could feel her shake and she scolded herself mentally for acting like such a child.

A strong arm wrapped around her shoulders, "I was having one too."

She sniffled and looked up at him through wet eyelashes, "You still have them?"

"Why do you think the light was on?"

Nancy shook her head in sadness and relief. She didn't want him to have more nightmares, but she was glad she wasn't the only one. Maybe that was another reason she needed him tonight. He was the only one who could make her feel like she wasn't alone. Her arms shot out and curled themselves around his torso; her cheek rested on his chest as she bawled for the first time since the incident.

His arms held her close as his hands tenderly caressed her back, "I'm here."

That only made her cry harder.

"Shhhh..." He cooed in her ear as he gently leaned her back onto the bed, making sure her head rested gently on a pillow before he let go. She gripped his shirt, begging for him to stay.

"I'm just getting a blanket," He reassured her. One of his many downy quilts came to rest over her still quivering figure. Then another. And another.

"I thought you said *a* blanket," She smiled despite her waterworks.

"I want to make sure you're warm," Jonathan's eyes crinkled as he grinned at her. His hands tucked the blankets underneath her until she was thoroughly wrapped like Jonathan was before she woke him.

He laid beside her when he was finished, chuckling, "You look cozy."

"Thanks to you," She sniffled and giggled a bit. He eyes seemed to focus on hers as his fingers gently wiped the tears away from her face.

"You know, if you ever have another one-"

"I know...and the same goes for you," Nancy wiggled her arms and hands free from the cocoon of quilts and held Jonathan's hands in hers.

"Thanks..."

They held each other's gaze, unwavering. He cupped her left hand with his tentatively and brought it to his lips. He was shaking again, nervous. Nancy only smiled, then decided to return the favor. She yanked his hand back and kissed it. Jonathan's face wrinkled in confusion.

She laughed at his expression and explained "We're here for *each other*. Not just you for me, but me for you too. You don't always have to be the strong one."

"Ok...but *you* came to *me*. So tonight, I'm strong," He took his from hers and stroked her hair out of her face. Their right hands were still clasped together.

"Then in the morning, it's my turn," She sighed as she leaned into his touch.

"Sure," His smile returned, "Now, focus on resting."

"Fine," She followed his soft-hearted command. Her eyes slipped closed as he continued to caress her hair. His thumb delicately traced soothing patterns over the back of her right hand as he held it in his.

"I'll be right here when you wake up."

"I know."

They stayed like this for a long time, content listening to each other

breathe. Soon, his hand slowed over her hair, coming to rest at the side of her cheek. The thumb gently tracing patterns ceased gradually. Nancy heard the even breaths of the sleeping boy beside her and let herself become entranced by the sound. He was right. He would stay and be there when she woke. *He could always fall asleep faster.*

Those were the last words in her mind as she drifted off to a place with no monsters and no missing children.

2. Chapter 2

Jonathan!

Nancy?!

Jonathan! I'm right here!

Follow my voice!

Gnarled trees that looked like rotting flesh loomed over her as she dashed in and out of them. The Demogorgon snarled, close behind her. It could extend a long, crooked arm and snare the fabric of her jacket with its knife-like fingernails. Black and grey specks of the creature's essence stifled the air. Toxic particles attached themselves to Nancy's lungs as she shakily gasped for breath, unable to control her distress. The death that plagued the Upside Down slowly killed every living cell in her body; she could feel it dying all around her. Sliding behind a disformed oak, Nancy waited for the predator on baited breath.

Nancy! Follow my voice!

Her neck snapped to the side. The gaping portal at the bottom of the tree beside her was closing gradually. She could run. He was there. It was a simple solution that seemed impossible. It was the only one that promised a slim chance of survival.

Frantic feet crunched long dead leaves as she darted out from her shelter. Screams ripped through her throat. She dove for the tree roots, but fell short. The Demogorgon reared up behind her like a nightmarish stallion, poised to strike her dead.

One last try.

Jonathan!

Solid arms encircled her tense figure, gently lifting her into an upright position. She pushed away violently, unable to accept her inevitable demise. She couldn't feel the quilts that cushioned her body, couldn't see the concerned expression of the young man holding her. His arms tightened as she continued to thrash, bringing

her a fraction of an inch nearer, "Nancy..."

Nancy's heart paused as her brain finally registered her surroundings. Someone was with her, and she was ok. The stench of the deceased was gone, replaced by another musk, one that calmed her raw nerves. No movement this person made was threatening. She relaxed slightly, feeling stupid for trying to escape so aggressively, or at all for that matter. Warmth was slowly radiating off the figure of her protector, and she needed to be closer. She suddenly latched onto the person she was desperately trying to get away from only moments ago. Daring to open her eyes, she was surprised when she saw with the fabric of Jonathan's shirt. Her face was buried in his shoulder, his hand cradling the back of her neck. His other arm was firmly wrapped around her waist. It was Jonathan that came to the rescue. Nancy quickly brought her own arms around his shoulders, wanting to stay in his embrace for as long as possible.

The memory of making the trek to the Byer's house in the middle of the night flooded her mind's eye. Duh. Why did those nightmares have to be so disorienting...

Stop shaking. She scolded herself as she felt herself shudder uncontrollably.

"I'm so sorry." Jonathan whispered against her ear.

"W-Why?" Her trembling made her stumble over her words, effectively making her stutter.

"Because...I left you for a few minutes to get you some breakfast..."

She gingerly lifted her head and sat back onto the bed when he trailed off. Looking over at the bedside table, she spotted a little tray with a bowl of corn flakes, a bran muffin and an orange delicately arranged on it. It was impossibly adorable, and made her shaking decrease significantly. There was a clock beside the little breakfast tray that had the same angry red numbers as hers. It glared at her.
9:03am.

"I should've waited until you were up..." Jonathan sighed, biting back a bit of emotion that welled up in his throat, "You just looked so

peaceful...I thought-"

"You're ok. Thank you...for saving me from the nightmare..." Her hand brushed his, reassuring him that everything was fine now. He kept his promise. He was there when she woke up.

She looked back at the breakfast foods and chuckled, "Did your mom or Will ask why you were taking breakfast to your room?"

"Well...Mom and Will were on their way to the space museum when I got up. I think she was planning on taking all of the little groupies along with them," He scratched the back of his neck with a shy smile.

Nancy sighed, thankful for Mrs. Byers. Mike wouldn't need his bike today. Or at least not right now.

Jonathan read her mind, "Did you use Mike's bike to get here?"

She nodded, feeling a flush of embarrassment rise on her cheeks. He just smiled and said, "Good."

"Good?" She returned his soft smile and tilted her head to the side.

This time it was Jonathan's cheeks that sported a light red tint, "I'd be...worried if you walked here by yourself...in the dark."

Brown irises met each other. Her heart beat frantically out of rhythm as his eyes held her gaze. The connection was fleeting, lastingly only a fraction of a second, but it left Nancy breathless. Struggling to keep the blood from rushing to her cheeks, she questioned every interaction she had with Jonathan. Why did she agree to monster hunt with him? What kept her by his side?

What are you to me?

She had refused to ask this question for such a long time, to both herself and Jonathan. Now, she desperately wanted to know the answer. Maybe now was the time.

Her lips formed a question, but it wasn't the right one, "Where's *your* breakfast?"

"Oh! I um...didn't think of that," His fingers scratched at his neck again, leaving streaks of irritated skin behind. The red scratches reminded her of the marks the Demogorgon could've made with its grotesque claws. The image of them digging into Jonathan's flesh forced her to speak.

"Don't do that..." She sighed as she tenderly pulled his hand away from his neck.

Jonathan didn't reply; he didn't trust himself to speak. It had been easy to touch her, even hold her, in times of distress. When she needed him, it was second nature to pull her close. But, to feel *her* gently take his hand, to hear the hint of concern in *her* voice was different. He didn't have a clue as to why.

"Sorry...I do that when I'm nervous," He sighed.

Nancy squeezed his hand and smiled, "I think we're past the point of being nervous around each other."

A scarlet blush graced his cheeks and spread to the tips of his ears, "Maybe."

Nancy giggled quietly to herself as she noticed his change of color. An awkward silence filled the room until Jonathan spoke again, "I have an idea."

Jonathan quickly scooped up the tray with Nancy's breakfast and balanced it on one hand as he led her out of the room.

They ate breakfast at the kitchen table together. It felt like déjà vu, like they had done this before. They both secretly hoped that this would not be the last time they shared this.

Nancy secretly wished for another nightmare.

Mike was waiting for her on the front porch when she arrived home. He was just dropped off by Mrs. Byers after their excursion to the space museum, but the day was still young. His buddies wanted to grab their bikes and reconvene somewhere so they could continue their adventure. Mike had suggested his house. Now, all he had to do

was wait. He checked his watch. 12:30pm.

He couldn't hide the shit-eating grin that was plastered onto his face as Nancy dismounted his bike and walked it towards him.

Her voice was meek as she spoke with her eyes down, "Thanks for the favor."

The bike was handed back to him gingerly. He pretended to inspect it for damage as his sister hopped from foot to foot, waiting for his decision. The shit-eating grin was back, and Nancy sighed in relief.

"The bike is in one piece, but you still owe me," He chuckled.

"What do you want?"

His eyes sparkled, "A love confession by the end of the week."

Nancy blanched, "What?!"

"Not to me! To Jonathan!" Mike screeched.

She rolled her eyes halfheartedly, still looking a bit shaken, "Very funny. Let me know when you think of something."

Mike watched her as she bounded up the stairs to the house and passed through the threshold. He knew where she went last night. Will said he could see her outside Jonathan's window. Mike told the boys about the note she had written to him, and they slowly but surely pieced the story together as they walked the familiar halls of the space museum. Mike knew that she didn't totally reject the idea of loving Jonathan, but was somehow still denying it.

The walkie-talkie beside him beeped to life. The voice on the other end was accented by a lisp, clearly indicating it was Dustin.

"Lucas, Will and I are on the way. Did Nancy bring your bike back?"

Mike clicked the button and replied, "Yup."

Another voice was emitted through the device. Will spoke, "Is operation *Jancy* still on?"

"Hell yeah."

Mike had already lost his love; he wasn't about to let his sister lose hers.